

congressional vote on a trade agreement before it is signed by the President.

From on high, the President cuts all the special interest deals. We saw that in the Bush years and, frankly, we saw it too often in the Clinton years, the first Bush and the Reagan years also. The trade negotiators would cut their special interest deals, send the agreement to Congress, and Congress had to vote, after the President had signed on, either up or down. Reasserting congressional authority must also ensure Congress's public policy prerogatives are respected by international trade organizations such as the World Trade Organization. We must not find our public policy subject to corporate rights of action at the WTO or NAFTA that outweighs the Government's responsibility to preserve the public welfare.

What has happened is the corporate rights have been respected but not rights of workers, not rules to protect the environment or consumer safety and food safety.

A global system such as the WTO that doesn't give countries policy space risks the very legitimacy of global institutions. Countries should have sovereignty. If Canada wants to pass a strong environmental rule, if Mexico wants to pass a strong food safety law, who are we, in a world trade body or as another government, or who is someone in a corporation to tell those countries they can't pass a strong environmental law or a strong food safety law.

I recognize the framework I have outlined is only one strategy, but we can all agree our current trade model has not been working. When we change the process for writing trade deals, we can make trade deals work for more people in our country and for people living in the countries who are our trading partners. We have seen demonstrations in Central America against trade agreements, understanding that these trade agreements have so often overridden consumer protection rules in their countries. We see people in our country complain of trade agreements because workers lose jobs, because safe drinking water is not protected under these agreements. It is time these trade agreements are written for communities, for workers, and for small businesses. They have not been in the past. This is our chance to set out a new direction on trade.

CONGO CONFLICT MINERALS ACT OF 2009

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, I want to pause from the press of daily business to consider the situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo. I have frequently come to the floor to talk about the tragedy in Darfur—yet the situation in Congo is worth as much attention.

The Democratic Republic of Congo has been devastated by civil war, conflict and a humanitarian crisis. Since

1998, there have been an estimated 5.4 million deaths. The poverty and insecurity in Congo is pandemic. Illegal armed groups and military forces commit widespread human rights violations with impunity. The conflict there still results in an estimated 45,000 deaths each month.

This is a tragic situation, deserving of the international community's attention.

My colleague from Kansas, Senator BROWBACK, and I traveled to the DRC together a couple of years ago. Congo is, in many ways, a beautiful country, rich in natural resources.

But, like so many other places in the world, Congo's natural resources have also become a curse. Warring factions struggle for control of resources to pursue their own political aims. During our trip, Senator BROWBACK and I learned that armed factions are plundering the mineral resources of eastern Congo and that illegal trade in these minerals is essentially financing the violence there.

We witnessed first-hand atrocities in eastern Congo—atrocities of horrific and inhumane proportions. Armed groups perpetrate unspeakable acts of sexual violence against women and girls to humiliate and terrorize communities and weaken their resistance.

I have met several times with a true modern day hero, Dr. Denis Mukwege, who runs the Panzi hospital of Bukavu, Congo. The Panzi hospital specializes in treatment for victims of sexual violence. The hospital performs surgeries and provides psychological counseling for these victims, but Dr. Mukwege and his staff are overwhelmed by the number of women seeking assistance.

Last year, I held a Judiciary hearing on rape as weapon of war. This is happening every day in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Rape and other forms of sexual violence affect hundreds of thousands of women and girls there, resulting in severe injuries, longterm psychological trauma, and immeasurable destructive impacts on the communities there. This war is being financed, at least in part, by the illegal trade in these minerals.

So what can we in the United States do about this? Well, many of these minerals end up right here in the U.S. and in many other countries, because they are used for everyday electronics products. Our cell phones, BlackBerrys, computers, and many other commonly used electronics contain these minerals.

Senator BROWBACK and I, along with Senator FEINGOLD, who chairs the Africa Subcommittee of the Foreign Relations Committee, have introduced legislation to create more transparency about the end users of these minerals in the United States.

The Congo Conflict Minerals Act of 2009 would require companies that are involved in commercial activities involving three minerals (coltan, cassiterite, and wolframite) to disclose the country of origin of the minerals to

the Securities and Exchange Commission. If the minerals are from DRC or neighboring countries, companies would have to also disclose the mine of origin.

We want to know where U.S. companies are getting these minerals, and we want to work with them to promote responsible practices and due diligence to ensure that their suppliers provide raw materials in a way that does not support the armed conflict or contribute to human rights abuses.

In the longer-term, we hope that Congo and its neighbors will establish a regional framework to prevent the illicit trade of these minerals. In the meantime, we can take this step to work with U.S. companies to ensure they are not inadvertently fueling the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

MUSLIM MIDDLE EAST

Mr. KYL. Madam President, in an April 16 Wall Street Journal column, "Speaking Truth to Muslim Power," former CIA officer and Middle East expert Reuel Marc Gerecht writes about the fierce internal debates over Islam, jihadism, and modernity within the Muslim Middle East.

As Gerecht writes, while Western countries cannot determine the outcome of those debates, they can help shape them and provide a boost to Muslim reformers. While it is fashionable to criticize President George W. Bush's Middle East policies, Gerecht says that Arab democracy activists "have never been so hopeful as they were" from 2002 to 2006, during which time democracy promotion flourished. He argues that President Bush's pro-democracy rhetoric "energized the discussion of representative government and human rights abroad."

I ask unanimous consent that Mr. Gerecht's column be printed in the RECORD, and I urge my colleagues to consider his thoughtful views.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From The Wall Street Journal, Apr. 16, 2009]

SPEAKING TRUTH TO MUSLIM POWER

(By Reuel Marc Gerecht)

"The United States is not at war with Islam and will never be. In fact, our partnership with the Muslim world is critical in rolling back a fringe ideology that people of all faiths reject."

So spoke President Barack Hussein Obama in Turkey last week. Following in the footsteps of the Bush administration, Mr. Obama wants to avoid labeling our enemy in religious terms. References to "Islamic terrorism," "Islamic radicalism," or "Islamic extremism" aren't in his speeches. "Jihad," too, has been banished from the official lexicon.

But if one visits the religious bookstores near Istanbul's Covered Bazaar, or mosque libraries of Turkish immigrants in Rotterdam, Brussels or Frankfurt, one can still find a cornucopia of radical Islamist literature. Go into the bookstores of Arab and Pakistani immigrant communities in Europe, or into